Since the shapes are very simple, a special

/162 cont./

463 323 [467] apprenticeship with a master is not absolutely necessary; Santos Kiskue, at any rate, began making pots by himself after an accident that left him with a stiff left wrist. He uses the unmixed clay that stands near his house. Out of this, constantly moistening it, he shapes on a /163/ board lying on the ground an even, round "clay sausage," which he then presses flat with the palm of his hand. He builds up his pots out of this in spirals. They are put with their lower part on a shallow clay bowl, so that he can turn them easily in closing up the junctures (Ills. 184 to 186 /see pp. 282-283/). He lets the freshly made pots dry for about a week under a roof, then he takes them to a place where there is sufficient dry wood. Here he places the pots very close together, stacks wood and twigs over them, and lets them burn for about two hours. They are then ready for use.

i) Candlemaking

388 [796] [462] [824] At the three annual church festivals a large number of candles (mbéla; Spanish: vela) are used to decorate the church. They are in part purchased, but largely homemade. Everyone is familiar with the process of manufacture, but for the festivals it is men's work. The wax is obtained from the wood laurel (Myrica pubescens Willd), whose small fruits, measuring about five to eight millimeters in diameter, are harvested in great masses in April and May. For this purpose the twigs are struck off and stripped of the fruits over the round berry net that is put in the opening of a large fiber bag. After they are dried, they are poured into a bag, boiled, and squeezed. The wax, caught in a vessel and dried, was formerly an important commercial product in the trade with the whites. In making the candles, wax is poured over the wicks until the proper thickness is obtained.

k) Fireworks

389 [796] [541] [462] No celebration and no church festival is possible without setting off the greatest possible number of fireworks. The firecrackers required for this are made by the men themselves.

4:Bernal Villa--28 E-5 (1952-1953) 1953 SC15 Paez SC15

/198 cont./

IX

The Wax Comes from the Woodlands

796 Before the fiestero goes to stay in the pueblo, the laborers make the candles and distill the aguardiente while the fireworks-maker produces the firecrackers and rockets.

• 388 124 The candles are made with the wax of the wild laurel (1)

1. Myrica pubescens Willd.

recently extracted from seeds gathered months earlier from the bushes in the woodlands. Laurel, of course, is a shrub with lanceolate leaves, which grows wild in the clearings after the harvest. During the months of April and May the branches are heavy with lead-colored and tiny seeds very similar in form to the fruit of the coffee tree. They are a favorite food of the wild pigeons, and for this reason, while they are ripening, the owner, or preferably his children, constantly frightens them [756] away. This is a reinforcement of the magic protection supplied [789] by the medicine man at the suggestion of the owner of the woodland. He has performed the exorcism to frighten away the unwanted birds: he has loaded his shotgun with chayuts (2) and

2. Escrofulareacea.

shot at the pigeons. They will not return.

[415] The seeds are gathered in fique bags. Ten workers gather approximately one arroba in one day. /199/ For the period of one month the seeds will be left to dry, scattered in a corner of the house, so that the wax will come out white and not green as would happen if this were not done.

388 To extract the wax, the seeds are packed into small sacks or bags, boiled, and pressed at once. The wax falls with the hot water into a round container; on the following day, the water that remains at the bottom of the container is removed, and the wax is left to solidify further.

/199 cont./

388 43 Up to a few years ago, the extraction of laurel wax was the only industry among the Calderas people that brought them monetary returns. And it was the sole article of active trading with the whites. At first the price was good; one peso a pound; nowadays it is barely worth 40 centavos. Thus, there is no 388 market for this article. The fiesteros and the albaceros have chunks of wax in their chambers. The laborers melt it in a copper pan and pour it at once into bamboo tubes, mixed with hot water so that it will not solidify at once. Into it they dip the notched wicks of different lengths so as to saturate them with wax, then bring them out into the air so that they will harden, saturate them once more with wax, and continue in this way until the candle has acquired the desired thickness. Several dozen are made; some large ones for the table, others of medium size for the church, and smaller ones for the mayordomos.

X

Gunpowder

389 829 648 The Paez are totally unfamiliar with the method of making gunpowder. And to explain how it is obtained, they tell the painful legend that it is made from human beings. It comes from a fat man, they say, fattened expressly for this purpose. He is hung up, a red-hot iron rod is inserted in his rectum; lard drips down; and this lard is the gunpowder. For this reason, they do not want to send their children to distant lands where the white man lives. They believe that they would be used to obtain gunpowder. "The white men greatly desire Indians in order to obtain gunpowder."

389 439 The Indians buy gunpowder in the urban centers. They work it up. The technique is almost universally known.

Chamonas

/327 cont./

223 black birds, are not eaten because they are probably animals of
825 the devil. It is said that in times past the Calderas Indians ate
262 beetles, the reason that they are nicknamed tandayaha (one who
[578] eats beetles), an epithet which they regard as offensive and which nearly always irritates them. The Calderunos say that they do not
[224] eat worms or the meat of rabbits and snakes. They regard as game
[223] animals the guara, deer, coati, armadillo, bat, and various species of birds.

224 Concerning bear hunting, the people of Mosoco relate /328/ real feats performed by Indians in open fights with the ani-
[237] mals. Bear fat is highly esteemed among the natives and "whites."

226. Fishing is less important than hunting. The rivers and streams contain sardines and coruntas /small river-fish/. During Holy Week and at Christmas they engage in fishing, when the
[462] water is low, by means of barbasco, nets, and hooks. This is strictly a masculine activity. In the Paez River they fish during the months of January and February and generally in months of drought.

They also gather crabs.

0

Laurel wax industry

● 398 Laurel, introduced by a man from Popayan /el payanés/,
824 Agustín Valencia, has played an important role in the economy of some parcialidades of Tierradentro. It grows wild in Calderas, Tumbichukue, Lame, San Andrés, Chinas, and Suin. The production of wax was the only industry in these parcialidades that permitted them to maintain regular trade with the "whites."

398 A mestizo trader from Mosoco says that he was a great ex-
43 porter of laurel wax. "It was the native industry" -- he says -- by means of which salt, trousers, shirts, hats, and centavos came in." In this business, he states, he made one arroba of profit per load. The pound was quoted at a peso in Silvia. The informant says that in the years 1946 and 1947 he took out from 800 to 1,000 arrobas of wax. He almost had a monopoly on the business. What little wax escaped him was purchased by traders from Belalcázar, who in turn took it by way of Mosoco to Silvia. The chief consumers of this product were the soap factories of Cali. The laurel wax industry waned in 1950, when those factories

/328 cont./

389 43 began to use other types of raw materials. The death blow was thus given to the only home industry of the above-mentioned regions. Wax is still gathered, but the price for an arroba in Silvia does not reach eight pesos. There is no longer any profit.

389 [373] [796] The Indians go on using it to make candles for household consumption and above all for illumination at religious fiestas. We have described the methods of gathering, extracting, and manufacturing laurel wax in the work entitled "La Fiesta de San Juan en Calderas, Tierradentro /The Fiesta of San Juan in Calderas, Tierradentro/," published in the Revista Colombiana de Folklore, Number 2 of 1953.

/329/

Mingas

476 461 [464] The minga is the most widespread form of labor among the Páez. The natives can work for themselves alone and are excellent laborers. But the task would demand more of their time and effort. Thus, the minga serves to prevent "boredom" during the work, to gain time, and to provide a labor force which would otherwise be hard to obtain.

476 The minga then is a co-operative system of labor whereby the interested party invites a specific number of acquaintances to perform a job, duly rewarding them with food, drink, and coca. "Communal work for any particular individual is truly loaned labor, with obligatory recompense," says Hernández de Alba /cited in English/.

476 554 [231] Indispensable articles of reward are meat, chicha, and, in nearly all the parcialidades, coca. The incidence of the mingas is thus almost in direct proportion to the possession of domestic animals. Those who lack such stock, that is to say, the poor according to the concepts of Páez culture, work alone or in the company of their sons, if they have any.

476 241 In the course of the cultivation cycle the following mingas are held: to fell the trees (clearings); to pile up the wood that remains after the burning and to cut stakes for the fence; to build fences; to do the planting and weeding.

In Calderas a minga for clearing is carried out in the following way:

7:Hernández de Alba E-5¼(no date) 1946 SC15 Paez SC15
Moguex

blue, the fruit of the jagua palm (kii), probably *Genipa* sp. A woven fabric is made black by burying it for several days with clay and branches of a *Phyllanthus* which they call "sal."

They make woolen bags by hand, using a kind of crochet technique without needles, and decorate them with rectangular and rhomboid figures. Some bags are made of hemp (fique), in which case the stitches are larger and the article has greater elasticity.

Weapons.—For weapons, the *Páez* used large, thick lances of black or chonta palm, 20 to 25 palms or more long, clubs or macanas, stones thrown with slings, large rocks rolled down from heights, spear throwers like those used by the *Chibcha*, and shields of jaguar, puma, or bear skin. The *Páez* quickly adopted iron arms from the Spaniards, and in the last wars of the Conquest they used steel swords and knives. In a recently discovered grave were copper bells, a golden breastplate, shield bars of tumbaga, a Spanish dagger, and a curved knife of the Arabian or north African type used by the conquistadors.

Today the *Páez* use the club or macana, ordinary guns, machetes, knives, and, for killing birds, the blowgun.

Fire making.—Fires are generally made today with flint and steel, but some Indians use modern matches. For both heating and cooking, the fire is made on the ground in the main house, surrounded by stones which help support the pots. It is covered at night, and almost never goes out.

Illumination is provided not only by the fire but by candles made of wax from the wax palm and from seeds of a wild laurel. The latter are cooked and pressed in a bag so that the wax drips into a half calabash or pot to form a semispherical lump. It is melted to make candles with cotton wicks. The *Páez* use these themselves and also sell them, for they are superior to candles made of animal tallow. A cruder means of lighting consists of transfixing a large number of "higuerilla" seeds on a long, thin bamboo splinter. When the splinter is laid horizontally and lighted, the first seed burns strongly, after which the flame passes from seed to seed, lasting some 15 minutes and throwing a fair light a few feet around.

COMMERCE

Each week a market is held in the municipio or in some of the small native villages (pls. 190, 191). The Indians sell vegetables, tortillas, eggs, chickens, and laurel wax, and buy salt, brown sugar, and especially lime (mambe) to be chewed with coca. Each product has a price in Colombian money, whether by quantity or weight. The unit of weight is called an "egg," and more or less equals the weight of a chicken egg. After his few customary transactions, paid for either in cash or in terms, in which the future coffee crop is mortgaged to the